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Birkholz Announces White Pine Winners

Recipients of the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence to be honored

Thursday, April 17, 2003- Senator Patricia Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, chair of the Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee announced today she will be presenting the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence to the Michigan 4H Youth Development Program and the 4H Youth Conservation Council on Tuesday morning, April 22 (Earth Day) in the Senate Chambers.

Senator Birkholz, who has restored the use of the White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence will present a Special Tribute, a Certificate of Achievement and a White Pine tree to the Michigan 4-H Development Program and the 4-H Youth Conservation Council said, "I'm honored to provide this recognition to these two groups who have shown such loyalty and commitment to conserving our precious natural resources. They are clearly role models in promoting environmental education and stewardship."

The tribute and the Award recognize the Michigan 4-H Youth Development Program and the 4-H Youth Conservation Council for their efforts to promote environment education environmental stewardship in and around the state of Michigan.

The Michigan Youth Development program provides educational opportunities that target age appropriate life skill development, emphasizes research-based experiential learning, involves volunteers and families and promotes a multi-cultural perspective. The mission of the program is to create non-formal, fun, educational opportunities to help youth thrive in a complex and changing world.

The Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council is a group of 25 selected youth between the ages of 13-19, representing all six of the Michigan State University Extension regions. This state-wide teen leadership council selects a conservation issue, researches the topic, develops an oral and written presentation, and then makes a recommendations to one of the standing committees of the State Senate or House of Representatives that handle issues pertaining to natural resources and the environment. This year the council researched the topic of small petroleum spills in the inland lakes, rivers and the Great Lakes which is a constant problem affecting our natural resources

Senator Birkholz congratulated the 4H leaders on their work and conveyed the importance of Earth Day as a way of celebrating the importance of protecting our state's natural resources. "Earth Day is an important opportunity to recognize the many citizen stewards of this state and to hold high their efforts in helping us to make Michigan a clean and healthy place to live and recreate. It is fitting that we use such an occasion to honor the youth of this state and their adult leaders with this White Pine Award.

The White Pine Award for Environmental Excellence began over 10 years ago to recognize an individual or a group of individuals who have made a consistent, enduring commitment in their words and actions in helping protect Michigan's environment. Senator Birkholz has elected to restore this recognition program begun by then Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus as a way of honoring the actions of citizens all over Michigan who have stood tall to promote a wise conservation ethic in the state.